



March 9, 2006

DEPARTMENT OF ED. TESTIFIES BEFORE CONGRESS

Over the past two weeks, the U.S. Department of Education (DOE) has had the opportunity to testify in front of Congress on behalf of the Administration's FY07 budget proposal. Representing the DOE has been Secretary Margaret Spellings and Assistant Secretary in the Office of Planning, Evaluation and Policy Development Tom Luce.

SENATE: The **Senate Labor Health and Human Services and Education (Labor H)** Appropriations Subcommittee hosted [Secretary Spellings](#) on March 1, and received her comments with a tepid response at best. Chairman Arlen Specter (R-PA) began the hearing by remarking that the education budget proposal is "*scandalous*" and "*insufficient*".

This response was not a surprise as he had publicly spoken out against the proposal after its introduction in early February. *"The President's FY07 budget proposal is going to require substantial modifications by the Congress,"* he said at the time. *"It is scandalous to provide insufficient funding for our Nation's two greatest capital investments: health and education ... I have already notified my colleagues, including leadership, that I will not support any budget resolution that does not provide adequate funding for domestic discretionary programs with special emphasis for my subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education."*

In her remarks, Spellings acknowledged that the committee had a "*very tough job ahead*" in determining what discretionary programs will be funded. *"The programs you make funding decisions for are discretionary, and you don't have much room to maneuver,"* she said. *"At the same time, as policymakers, we must focus on results. We've looked at data to see what policies are working for students and where we can save taxpayers money or work more efficiently by eliminating and consolidating less effective programs."*

Ranking Member Tom Harkin (D-IA) also voiced his disappointment in the proposal, questioning whether Spellings thought that the budget should see the budget passed as it was introduced. After demanding a "yes" or "no" answer from the secretary, Spellings eventually answered "yes".

Several senators voiced their concern over the 42 education programs proposed for elimination, including Perkins. Senator Herb Kohl (D-WI) questioned the rationale behind the President's choice to attempt, once again, eliminating all funding for career technical education when the senate had sent him a "clear message" last year by voting 99 to 0 to reauthorize the bill.

HOUSE: On March 2, the **House Appropriation's Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies (Labor H)** hosted a hearing to discuss American competitiveness and how it relates to education. Committee Chairman Ralph Regula (R-OH) opened the hearing by praising the recent discussion on the importance of competitiveness but challenged the nation to provide the necessary action to achieve this goal.

The first of three witnesses, [Assistant Secretary Tom Luce](#) began by noting that in order for America to be competitive, the education system "*must produce not only Nobel prize winners, but also an educated workforce that allows every young person in the United States to be guaranteed a job after graduation.*"

In order to achieve this goal, Luce said that education must be focused on science and mathematics as "*all professions will require an increased level of science and math knowledge.*" Luce advocated several new programs aimed at achieving this goal including "MathNow" and a movement to nationally scale Advanced Placement (AP) and International Baccalaureate (IB) courses.

Nancy Grasmick, Superintendent of Schools for the State of Maryland, and Michael G. Morris, Chairman, President and CEO of American Electric Power (AEP) Company and Chairman for the Energy Task Force, Business Roundtable (BRT) followed Luce's testimony. Both agreed with the need to emphasize science and mathematics, and stressed the need to build a pipeline of quality math and science teachers through grants and AP or IB training.

Several Representatives spoke to the need for competitiveness, and advocated for increased funding for education by promoting that an investment in the future requires an investment in education.

Rep. Peterson's (R-PA) commented that within growing industries, the use of high-tech machinery is increasingly important and that workers who have received a technical education are required, but not necessarily those with a four-year, liberal arts degree. Grasmick supported this notion, and then explained the role Career Clusters play within Maryland schools. They provide students with opportunities throughout the continuum while teaching the prerequisites or the basics for workplace success.

Regula concluded this conversation by noting that he agrees Perkins funding should be restored and that he will not "*trade off Perkins funding to extend No Child Left Behind (NCLB) into high schools,*" although he is concerned with the lack of accountability that Perkins exhibits.

HOUSE: On March 9, [Secretary Spellings](#) once again had the opportunity to testify before Congressional members, but this time to the **House Appropriation's Subcommittee on Labor H**.

Chairman Regula began the hearing by commenting that "*competitiveness is an acronym for education*", and that the entire committee was pleased that the Administration and DOE were addressing this issue. Regula also voiced his concern over the high school drop-out rate to which Spellings responded that more rigor and remediation is needed to address this problem as is expanding Advanced Placement

development.

When questioned, Spellings explained that the Performance and Evaluation Rating Tool (PART) was largely used to determine which education programs should be eliminated. Representative Simpson (R-ID) doubted this rationale, asking Spellings to explain how TRIO and Perkins were not making a difference in students' lives. Spellings stated that Perkins *"lack rigorous academic standards, and yes, our investments can be better used."* She continued saying that the DOE does not want prescriptive programs, but rather comprehensive programs.

Representative Peterson (R-PA) expressed his severe disappointment that the Administration has chosen to not focus on any kind of technology training for students, saying *"We have to put technology in our schools or we are not going to progress."*

Several other Representatives agreed and shared their concern over the elimination of Perkins, TRIO, Head Start and other programs marked for elimination. Regula concluded the hearing by once again asking the DOE to focus on high school drop out rates as well as reading improvement.

SENATE MARKS UP FY07 BUDGET

Yesterday, the Senate Budget Committee began the tedious process of marking up their FY07 budget resolution. Senate Budget Chairman Judd Gregg's (R-NH) mark for the FY07 education funding levels include \$55.8 billion for education funding, which is \$1.5 billion over the President's request of \$54.3 billion. Additionally, the Senate budget committee granted the President's request for \$412 million in FY07 to fund new math and science education initiatives as well as programs to insure students have access to highly skilled teachers. Amendments to the Senate FY07 budget resolution are taking place today.

To view the Chairman's mark of the FY07 budget, click [here](#).

The House Budget Committee is not expected to mark up their FY07 budget resolution until next week at the earliest.

UPDATE: SENATE DEAR COLLEAGUE LETTER

Thank you to those of you who urged your senators to sign onto the "Dear Colleague" letter in support of restoring funding to Perkins at \$1.3 billion. This letter, which was addressed to the Senate Budget Committee Chairman Judd Gregg (R-NH) and Ranking Member Kent Conrad (D-ND), included 42 signatures.

Please be sure to thank your senators if they signed onto the letter! If you would like to see a copy of the final letter, please email Nichole Jackson at njackson@careertech.org.

Akaka (D-HI)
Baucus (D-MT)
Bayh (D-IN)

Bingaman (D-NM)
Boxer (D-CA)
Burns (R-MT)
Cantwell (D-WA)
Chambliss (R-GA)
Clinton (D-NY)
Collins (R-ME)
Craig (R-ID)
Dayton (D-MN)
DeWine (R-OH)
Dodd (D-CT)
Dole (R-NC)
Dorgan (D-ND)
Durbin (D-IL)
Feingold (D-WI)
Feinstein (D-CA)
Jeffords (I-VT)
Johnson (D-SD)
Kennedy (D-MA)
Kerry (D-MA)
Kohl (D-WI)
Lautenberg (D-NJ)
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Lincoln (D-AR)
Lott (R-MS)
Menendez (D-NJ)
Mikulski (D-MD)
Murray (D-WA)
Obama (D-IL)
Pryor (D-AR)
Reed (D-RI)
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Salazar (D-CO)
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